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U46 approves fall start for pilot online PE course for students at Elgin, Bartlett high schools, DREAM Academy

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- School District U46 board members approved a new online PE course in which students receive a heart rate monitor to use to electronically record their heart rates during 150 minutes of exercise a week.

School District U46's test of an online physical education course in which students use monitors to electronically record physical activity outside of school will start this fall.

U46 School Board members voted 5-0 this week to allow the independent PE course, which allows students to skip class in a school gymnasium in favor of participating in a physical activity they are willing to do on their own time for at least 150 minutes every week.

It will begin as a pilot program in [Elgin](#) and Bartlett high schools and the DREAM Academy, U46's alternative high school in Elgin, in the 2019-20 school year. If successful, it will roll out district-wide in 2020-21.

The pilot program will be open to 125 juniors and seniors at the three schools. The district will pay \$18,848 for the purchase of heart rate monitors, online license fees for students and staff, and professional development, officials said. The expansion into the other high schools would cost another \$127,000.

PE teachers will be responsible for getting the heart rate monitors to the students, teaching them how to use them and meeting with students about 10 times per semester. Students will track and upload their personal fitness data or check in with their teacher to transfer data from their monitors, according to district documents.

The change allows for more schedule flexibility and could benefit those students who do better socially, emotionally and physically with a more individualized fitness plan, U46 student wellness coordinator Tracey Jakaitis said last week. It will also help students learn how to be physically active outside of school and should reduce the number of students seeking waivers to opt out of a PE so they have time to take a different class, Jakaitis said.

At Monday's meeting, Curriculum and Instruction Director Trisha Shrode told the board the pilot program will help the district determine if money can be saved by reducing the number of traditional PE classes offered.